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TELEVISION

Log Updates

Updates from TV Week's Sunday log:

8 A.M.
58 Auto Racing: NASCAR Grand National Charlotte (N.C.) 300

9 A.M.
3 Cup Hydroplane Race

3 P.M.
4 Greatest Sports Legends

4 P.M.
7 Black History Month
9 Crime Inc.

10:20 P.M.
USA Cover Story: Smokey Robinson.

10:50 P.M.
USA Hollywood Insider

11:20 P.M.
USA Tennis: Volvo U.S. Tourney

WHEN IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA VISIT UNIVERSAL STUDIOS TOUR AN MCA COMPANY

3 ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATIONS
INCLUDING
DENZEL WASHINGTON
Stephen Biko

CRY FREEDOM
FROM THE ACADEMY AWARD WINNING DIRECTOR OF "GANDHI"

UNIVERSAL PICTURES presents MARBLE ARCH production
KEVIN KLINE · PENELOPE WILTON · DENZEL WASHINGTON
RICHARD ATTENBOROUGH'S film "CRY FREEDOM"
BASED ON "BIKO" by ASKING FOR TROUBLE · DONALD WOODS · as GEORGE FENTON · JOMO SWANGWA · NORMAN SPENCER · JOHN BAILEY · TERENCE CLEGG
PG PARENTAL GUIDANCE SUGGESTED · SOME MATERIAL MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR CHILDREN · PANAVISION
SCREENPLAY JOHN BAILEY · DIRECTED RICHARD ATTENBOROUGH · FOR THE BERKELEY REPERTORY THEATRE · A UNIVERSAL PICTURE

NOW PLAYING

931-9800 — AMC
KABUKI 8
POST at FILLMORE
SHOWS TODAY AT 1:00,4:05,7:10, and 10:20 PM.

SHOWS DAILY AT 12:50,3:50,7:00, and 10:00 PM.
742-9200 — CINEMA
CENTURY PLAZA 8
SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO

ALSO SHOWING AT THESE SELECTED THEATRES THROUGHOUT THE BAY AREA

EAST BAY
Oakland- GRAND LAKE CINEMA
Berkeley- ACT CINEMA
Richmond- HILLTOP MALL
Hayward- SOUTHLAND CINEMA
Fremont- FREMONT HUB CINEMA

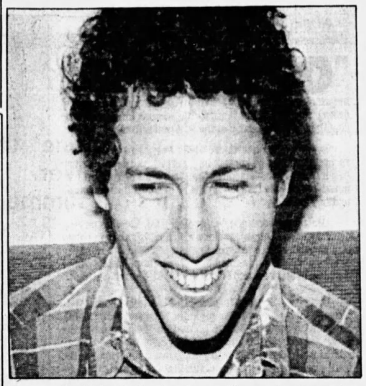
EAST BAY
Pleasant Hill- REGENCY CINEMA
PENINSULA
S. San Francisco- CENTURY PLAZA 8
San Mateo- HILLSDALE CINEMA

SAN JOSE
Mt. View- CENTURY 10
San Jose- CENTURY 24
Milpitas- AMC MILPITAS 10
MARIN
Fairfax- FAIRFAX CINEMA

ACADEMY MEMBERS: YOUR CARD WILL ADMIT YOU AND A GUEST TO ANY PERFORMANCE.

MUSIC

Yo La Tengo



Former rock critic Ira Kaplan sings in a gruff, wavering tenor voice

Failed Rock Critic Forms Own Band

BY GINA ARNOLD
SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

THERE'S A common belief in rock-and-roll circles that all rock critics are just failed rock musicians. In the case of the New York-based band Yo La Tengo, however, the opposite is true. Yo La Tengo is led by former New York Rocker, Soho Weekly News and Creem Magazine rock critic Ira Kaplan, a self-described failed rock critic turned rock and roller.

"I was only a rock critic because I was just too chicken to play [in a band] anyway," Kaplan says. "I formed Yo La Tengo when I got brave enough — after meeting [drummer] Georgia [Hubley]. We bullied each other into doing it."

The fact that Kaplan is a fairly well-known critic has only helped Yo La Tengo find an audience, Kaplan says. "After all, there's a long tradition of rock critics forming bands," he points out. "Look at Lester Bangs, Lenny Kaye [of Patti Smith's band] and Richard Meltzer."

Yo La Tengo — the name means "I've Got It!" in Spanish, and refers to the phrase that multinational Mets' outfielders use to alleviate lingual confusion on the baseball diamond — has been touring the East Coast to almost unanimous approval for two years now. But national recognition has been a longer time in coming. The band's first LP, "Ride the Tiger," contained a particularly winsome blend of critically acclaimed styles and songs, drawing from the sources of which most rock critics' record collections are chock-full: the Velvet Underground, Bob Dylan, Television. But the band's second LP, "New Wave Hot Dogs," is doing well with noncritics as well, especially on college radio, prompting its first West Coast tour.

Yo La Tengo's albums have contained covers of songs by the Kinks, Lou Reed and Pete Seeger, critics' faves all. But Kaplan claims that he's not out to second-guess the critics, despite the fact that many aspects of his band's appeal are somewhat literary. For one thing, Kaplan sings in a gruff, wavering tenor that he laughingly refers to as a legacy to "Jewish-oriented rock," citing Dylan and Reed as precedents.

KAPLAN'S critical perspective pops up all over the album — sometimes where it's least expected. The song "Lewis" is a sharp critical attack on rock supergroups of the '70s. Kaplan sings, "Maybe just like you someday I will forget every hit song America ever had," hardly a sentiment that could be much appreciated by the record companies of America.

Luckily, Yo La Tengo plays music that can be enjoyed by noncritical listeners, too. As a critic, Kaplan says he's unusually aware of the pitfalls and marketing strategies that can force underground and struggling hopeful bands off the road. But his own assessment is positive: "I find it very difficult discussing the quality of my own music, but I think that this record is more diversified than is currently considered wise or marketable in the music industry, and I consider that a good thing."

Yo La Tengo appears Monday at the I Beam.

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